Examine how the author’s decision to switch from third person to first person enhances this novel.

In the novel *The Things They Carried* by TimO’Brien, the voice changes from third person to first person, with the author as the narrator, in the second chapter. This change starts in the first sentence of the second chapter when O’Brien says, “Many years after the war Jimmy Cross came to visit me at my house in Massachusetts, and for a full day we drank coffee and smoked cigarettes and talked about everything we had seen and done so long ago, all the things we still carried through our lives” (27). This quick shift in voice surprises the reader and adds a new dimension to the novel by making it a first hand account of the Vietnam War. In the first chapter, there is a mysterious undertone because it is not known who was actually telling the story, or if it is even a true story. When the author changes voices though, the reader can see that it is O’Brien telling his story of his time in the Vietnam War. This sudden switch keeps the reader on their toes, and makes them wonder what the rest of the novel will be like. Before the change of voice, the novel focuses on Jimmy Cross, but now it seems as if the remainder of the novel will highlight O’Brien’s experiences.  The novel could also concentrate on O’Brien’s and Cross’s relationship through the war and after the war. Without the change of voice, the reader would not be questioning these ideas, and the story would not have as much historical value because the narrator would not be known.